

July 17, 2006

**FOOD STAMP  
Special Notice  
06-16**

**CalWORKs  
Special Notice  
06-17**

**MEDI-CAL  
Special Notice  
06-11**

**CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR IMMIGRANTS (CAPI)  
Special Notice  
06-03**

**GENERAL RELIEF  
Special Notice  
06-04**

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**Subject**                    **INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING A MANUAL STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE (SUA) INCREASE**

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**Effective Date**        Upon Receipt

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**Reference**             All County Letter (ACL) NO. 06-14  
Food Stamp Program Guide Letter No. 531

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**Purpose**                The purpose of this joint Special Notice is to:

- Inform staff San Diego County has opted out of the automated SUA Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) process, and
- Provide instructions to staff on completing a manual SUA COLA increase.

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**Background**        Food Stamp Program Guide Letter No. 531 informed staff of the 21.5 percent SUA increase, from \$223 to \$271 effective August 1, 2006. CalWIN ran an automated SUA COLA mass update on July 15, 2006. CalWIN counties had the option to run the automated mass update or update the SUA manually.

Running an automated Food Stamp SUA COLA mass update would force CalWIN to run an eligibility determination and budget calculation (EDBC) on all associated programs. Consequently, CalWIN would take unintended case actions and produce client correspondence on associated cases, creating a large workload that would require staff to identify and resolve issues not related to the SUA COLA.

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**Background  
(Continued)**

Two counties had a mock SUA COLA run, and the results showed automated process failed a large number of cases because the system identified some existing case situations as "Pre Authorization Exceptions".

Staff at Strategic Planning and Operational Support performed a thorough evaluation of the pros and cons of the automated versus manual options of running the SUA COLA. In order to lessen the impact to staff and programs, it was determined San Diego County would opt out of the automated SUA COLA run and process the COLA manually.

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**Reference Table**

The Standard Utility Allowance Deduction Referral Table was updated in the Maintain Reference Table Values on June 15, 2006 to reflect the August 2006 SUA increase amount.

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**Updating the  
SUA Manually**

In order for the SUA COLA increase to take effect, Human Service Specialists (HSS) must run EDBC and authorize food stamp programs that have the SUA indicator selected in CalWIN, **no later than September 30, 2006**. These programs include:

- Public Assistance Food Stamp (PAFS),
- Non-Assistance Quarterly Reporting Food Stamp (NAFS), and **Change Reporting NAFS**, and
- Transitional Food Stamp (TFS) including the Non-System Determined Issuance (NSDI) TFS.

**With an exception of the NSDI/TFS and discrepant cases, the manual process consists of running EDBC and authorizing the case.**

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**CalWIN Reports**

To assist the HSS with the manual SUA update process, San Diego County requested and has received the following reports:

- A list of cases with recurring NSDI payments with their through dates, plus recurring benefit amount for aid type 0F.
  - A list of all NAFS and PAFS cases that effective August 2006 have:
    - The SUA indicator selected
    - The SUA amount not equal to \$271, and
    - Benefits that have not been authorized (SUA COLA has not taken effect).
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**CalWIN Reports  
(Continued)**

- Updated lists at the end of July, August, and September identifying cases that have not been processed.
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**HSS Actions**

HSS's must use the lists provided by Strategic Planning & Operational Support (SPOS) to determine if the SUA has been updated. In order to determine this, and/or update the SUA COLA, use the following steps:

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>
1	Go to Wrap-Up
2	Select Initiate Wrap-Up
3	Enter the case number and date range that includes August 2006, and click "Open"
4	Select "Display Food Stamps –Financial Eligibility Budget" and click on "Start Queue"
5	For payment month of August and ongoing  A) Is the <b>SUA</b> selected? B) Does the <b>Total Utility Cost amount</b> reflect the increased SUA amount?  If <b>YES</b> to both go to Step 6  If <b>No</b> , to either A or B, go to step 8
6	Return to Wrap-Up and select "Display Eligibility Summary", enter the case number and range that includes August 2006 and click "Open". Go to next step
7	Does the Food Stamp program show "Authorized" in the "Display Eligibility Summary"  If <b>YES, Stop</b> , the SUA COLA has been updated and no other action is needed to update the SUA COLA.  If <b>No</b> , go to step 8
8	Determine if the Food Stamp program has an associated program. To find out:  • From the " <b>Inquiry</b> " button on the Navigator, expand <b>Case Inquiry</b> . Highlight the <b>Search on Case Information</b> window and click <b>Open</b> .

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HSS Action  
(Continued)

Step	Action
9	Enter the <b>case number</b> and click <b>Search</b> . Click the row for the appropriate program and then click the <b>Case Details</b> button. The Inquire on Case Information window will open.
10	The <b>Programs</b> tab lists the programs,  Does the the food stamp program has an associated program? (e.g. Medi-Cal, General Relief, CAPI, or CalWORKs)  If <b>Yes</b> , go to Step 11 If <b>No</b> , go to step 12
11	Enter AU batch exception for all other associated programs to ensure that the data change does not impact benefits on associated programs. Select the Collect Case Special Indicators window from the Data Collection tree in the Intake & Case Maintenance subsystem. Select the Batch Authorization Exceptions for all programs assigned to a different HSS in the Type of Special Indicator drop down field (e.g. for Medi-Cal, select Batch AU Exception-MC) to prevent Auto-Authorization for any programs assigned to other HSS. <b>Remember any Companion Program will also need to be entered separately.</b>  The AU batch exceptions for the associated programs shall have the following effective begin date: <b>Effective Begin date</b> = The date the action is being taken <b>Effective End Date</b> = Leave blank  This will prevent any auto-authorization on the selected AU batch exception program(s)
12	Update the SUA COLA by running EDBC and authorizing the case. If the Capture Benefit Discrepancy appears, validate the entry for the Food Stamp Program only.

In July, August, and September 2006, in addition to using the lists provided, the HSS should process the SUA COLA update for Food Stamp cases with SUA selected in CalWIN, when:

- Processing QR 7's
- Recertifying the case

**NOTE:** The new lists include cases identified on the "FS SUA Cases Using Actual" report provided to staff with the issuance of Food Stamp Program Guide Letter No. 531 that have not been updated.

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**NSDI,  
Transitional  
Food Stamp  
Cases**

Using the TFS list of cases currently receiving NSDI allotments, the HSSs must manually calculate the TFS benefit amount allowing the increased SUA amount.

- If the TFS case is eligible to a supplement, issue the supplement following the policy and procedure guidelines in Regional Eligibility and Employment Operations Memo (REEOM) 06-02.

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**Discrepant  
Cases**

Discrepancies must be resolved in order for the SUA COLA to be updated and authorized. Cases are discrepant if the authorization status shows “pending” in Wrap-Up. Resolving discrepancy may require initiating “case interview” in CalWIN. To initiate “case interview”, the HSS must expand **Data Collection** from the **Intake & Case Maintenance** button on the Navigator and select **Initiate Window Queue**, enter the case number, and click **Open**.

In the **Initiate Window Queue** window, select the discrepant program and click **Initiate Queue**.

For this activity, the HSS may leave “Conversion Default Values” as they are. If so, these default values must be changed at a later date when the discrepant cases are corrected.

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**Capture  
Discrepancy  
Window**

When running EDBC, the **Capture Discrepancy Information** window appears prior to the Benefit Authorization window. If the Capture Discrepancy window displays the months of August and/or September 2006, to have CalWIN correctly update the SUA COLA amount for these months, the **Evaluate Benefit Discrepancy** box must be set to “Y” for **Food Stamps**.

**NOTE: The HSS must ensure the “Evaluate Benefit Discrepancy” box is set to “N” for other programs so that unintended case action will not be taken on other programs.**

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**Corrective Action  
and Unit  
Supervisors  
Action**

**Tracking the Progress of the Manual SUA COLA Process**

To confirm that all case actions to process the SUA COLA increase are completed timely, Strategic Planning and Operation Support recommends Family Resource Centers (FRC) Corrective Action Supervisors (CASs) monitor the SUA update process along with the unit supervisors. By closely monitoring the progress, CASs and the unit supervisors can ensure that the manual SUA COLA process is completed no later than September 30, 2006.

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Client  
Correspondence

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CalWIN will produce the standard change notice DFA 377.4 QR or QR 377.4 to provide notification to households in which benefits change due to the SUA increase.

**STUFFER RETROACTIVE NOTICE**

Instead of issuing the temporary mass change notice TEMP 2193A (ENG/SP) to each household as instructed on FSPG Letter No. 531, FRCs may post the notice in their lobbies and other areas frequented by clients. FRCs may remove the TEMP 2193A (ENG/SP) from the lobbies at the end of October.

The attached TEMP 2193A (ENG/SP) has been updated to reflect that San Diego County is issuing a retroactive benefits supplement due to the SUA COLA increase in September.

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Medi-Cal, GR,  
CAPI, and  
CalWORKs  
Impact

Medi-Cal, GR, CAPI, and CalWORKs HSSs with Food Stamp associated programs should continue to pay attention to their alerts and communication from the FS HSSs especially between July and September.

If **Batch AU Exception** special indicator has not been entered, HSSs with associated programs may see client correspondence (NOA) created for actions that he/she did not take. Review and delete any inappropriate NOAs generated by this action.

If the Food Stamp HSS entered **Batch AU Exception** special indicator, review the EDBC results. If the results are correct, authorize, and end-date the Batch AU.

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Quality  
Assurance (QA)/  
Quality Control  
(QC)

When applicable, QA/QC will cite the appropriate dollar and/or procedural error when the SUA COLA increase has not been processed by October 2006.

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Forms Impact

No Impact

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Assistant Deputy  
Director

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*ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:*

**KIM FORRESTER** for  
Self-Sufficiency Programs  
Strategic Planning & Operational Support

*ORIGINAL SIGNED BY KIM FORRESTER FOR::*

**VICKY MIZEL** for  
Medical Care Program Administration  
Strategic Planning & Operational Support

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DH

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